

June 12, 2009 - Slaughter Works to Gain Assurances From Hickey-Freeman Bidder Emerisque

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Slaughter
Works to Gain Assurances From Hickey-Freeman Bidder Emerisque

Slaughter Affirms Commitment to
Hickey-Freeman Employees

Rochester, NY - Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28), Chairwoman of the House Committee on Rules, late yesterday spoke with Emerisque founder, Mr. Ajay Khaitan, concerning Emerisque's plans to acquire Hickey-Freeman and its parent company, Hartmarx. Rep. Slaughter also reached out to Hickey-Freeman employees to affirm her commitment to supporting them.

Emerisque has pledged to operate the company as a going concern, without the threat of liquidation in the foreseeable future. Emerisque, which has garnered union support, says it will maintain its "Made in America" status and work with the union in a mutually agreeable way to preserve jobs.

Rep. Slaughter spoke with Mr. Khaitan to gain his assurances that he would abide by this position and reinforced that the integrity of the Hickey-Freeman brand and its future profitability is predicated on maintaining the Rochester craftsmen and women who through their work have built its reputation over the past century.

Mr. Khaitan assured Rep. Slaughter that Emerisque's focus is on maintaining heritage brands, such as Hickey-Freeman which he described as a jewel in the tailored market that rivals the finest European-made men's apparel. Furthermore, Mr. Khaitan agreed with Rep. Slaughter's assessment that the Rochester facility is uniquely suited to continue to produce Hickey-Freeman's exclusive products.

The full text of the letter Rep. Slaughter issued to Hickey-Freeman employees follows:

Dear Hickey-Freeman
Employees,

Fortunately, after months of uncertainty about the future of Hickey-Freeman and concerns with maintaining your jobs, we are turning the corner and are now on a more promising path. I wanted to share with you an update on my activities to help keep our local Hickey-Freeman factory in business here in Rochester and to reiterate my continued commitment to you and this company. I have been pleased to help keep the factory in business in the past by correcting wool tariff issues and I am pleased to help keep the factory in business now during the bankruptcy process.

Hickey-Freeman is a world-renowned brand and its record of profitability, and its reputation as a producer of high quality apparel, is a direct result of you: the tremendously skilled and hardworking Rochester employees who create its apparel. You simply cannot take the Rochester out of Hickey-Freeman, and still have a Hickey-Freeman quality suit that people will buy for top dollar.

This is the message I have been conveying continually in phone calls and letters to Wells Fargo's CEO and others as I have supported local management and the union throughout the Hartmarx bankruptcy process. Even from a business perspective, shareholders and creditors stand to gain most by allowing this company to operate in the United States, rather than liquidating its assets or shifting production overseas.

Not to mention that in today's economic climate it would have been unconscionable if Wells Fargo did not provide the same consideration to its creditors, like Hartmarx, that the federal government and U.S. taxpayers provided to Wells Fargo when it received billions in assistance during the height of the financial crisis. To reinforce this point to Wells Fargo, I wrote to Treasury Secretary Geitner last month urging him to ensure that institutions provided federal assistance, like Wells Fargo, sustain American companies and the workers they employ.

Fortunately, our efforts succeeded last week when Wells Fargo and the Bankruptcy court positioned the union-supported Emerisque bid to proceed. Upon the court's action, Hartmarx CEO Homi Patel said it best when he thanked me for my assistance and acknowledged that the company would not now be in a position to re-emerge and succeed without your help and this Congressional intervention.

But we must continue our unified front since the bankruptcy process is not yet concluded and a less acceptable offer could emerge. Although the Emerisque offer has garnered employee support, please be assured that I will hold Emerisque to their word. Emerisque has pledged to operate the company as a going concern, maintain its Made in America status, and work with the union in a mutually agreeable way to preserve union jobs. I have spoken to Emerisque's founder, Mr. Ajay Khaitan to gain his assurances and reiterate that the integrity of the Hickey-Freeman brand and its future profitability is predicated on maintaining the Rochester craftsmen and women who through their work have built its reputation over the past century. Moreover thanks to wool tariff relief I enacted in Congress to stop production from moving overseas, it is now cost competitive to operate Hickey Freeman's factory in Rochester.

Thanks to your fine workmanship, Avenue

D is every bit as important to men's fashion as Paris and Milan. The work you do and the products you craft are our city's ambassador to the Board Rooms of the world. Hickey-Freeman has been a Rochester hallmark for over a hundred years and I will continue to do all I can to see it thrive for another hundred. Please do not hesitate to contact me for assistance with this or any other federal matter important to you.

Sincerely,

Louise

M. Slaughter

Member

of Congress

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